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WEIRD! EERIE! STARTLING!

WEB OF MYSTERY

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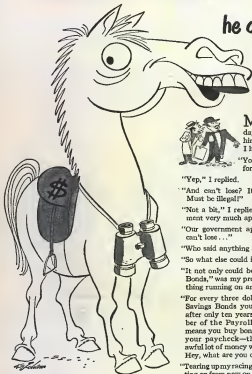
APRIL 10

B-BUT I'M NOT DEAD!
I CAN'T BE! DON'T
THEY SEE I'M
STANDING RIGHT HERE!!



THE LORELEI OF LOON LAKE
LEGACY of the ACCURSED
and other strange tales

"There's no such animal," he cried!



MY FRIEND and I were picking the ponies one day when I started telling him about a *sure thing* I heard about.

"You say it pays four bucks for every three?" he asked.

"Yep," I replied.

"And can't lose? It *automatically* wins? Must be illegal!"

"Not a bit," I replied. "In fact, the government very much approves..."

"Our government approves of a horse who can't lose..."

"Who said anything about a horse?" I asked.

"So what else could it be but a horse...?"

"It not only could be—but is—U. S. Savings Bonds," was my prompt reply. "The surest thing running on any track today."

"For every three dollars you invest in U. S. Savings Bonds you get four dollars back after only ten years. And if you're a member of the Payroll Savings Plan—which means you buy bonds *automatically* from your paycheck—that can amount to an awful lot of money when you're not looking. Hey, what are you doing?"

"Tearing up my racing form! The horse I'm betting on from now on is U. S. Savings Bonds."

Automatic saving is sure saving—U.S. Savings Bonds



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The Lorelei of Loon Lake

I USED TO LAUGH AT TALK OF THE SUPERNATURAL, OF STRANGE, BIZARRE HAPPENINGS, OF MYSTERIOUS FORCES BEYOND HUMAN MEN. I THOUGHT THEY WERE THE PRODUCT OF WARPED, SUPERSTITIOUS MINDS. THERE HAD TO BE A COLD, LOGICAL EXPLANATION FOR EVERYTHING, I THOUGHT. BUT NOT ANY MORE. NOW, WHEN SUCH TALK COMES UP, I FALL INTO A DREAD SILENCE AND SLINK AWAY, SINCE THAT WEIRD EXPERIENCE THAT LAST NIGHT OF MY VACATION AT LOON LAKE LODGE...



AT MIDNIGHT, HOPING A COLD PLUNGE IN THE LAKE WOULD RID ME OF THE STRANGE RESTLESSNESS THAT HAD BEEN KEEPING ME AWAKE...



I WOULDN'T GO NEAR THAT LAKE AGAIN FOR A MILLION BUCKS! THE OTHER NIGHT THERE WAS A KIND OF UNDERTOW-- LIKE HANDS DRAGGING AT MY ANKLES, TRYING TO PULL ME DOWN AND DOWN AND DOWN!



POOR LUKE BROWN WAS THE TIMID TYPE WHO WAS ALWAYS SEEING, HEARING, AND FEELING THINGS IN THE DARK. HIS SCARY TALK MADE ME LAUGH. WHAT WAS THERE TO BE AFRAID OF?



BRRE! KIND OF A QUIET, SPOOKY NIGHT. AT THAT! CHILLY TOO! MAYBE IT IS FOOLISH TO GO SWIMMING ALONE ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS!

SHIVERING, AND FILLED WITH UNEXPLAINABLE UNEASINESS, I WAS JUST ABOUT TO RETURN TO THE LODGE WHEN A WOMAN'S VOICE ECHOED THROUGH THE MOON-WHITE NIGHT, FROM THE DIRECTION OF THE WATER, CALLING MY NAME...

REASSURED AT THE PROSPECT OF COMPANY FOR MY SWIM, I CONTINUED ON DOWN TO THE BATHING PIER, ONLY TO FIND IT DESERTED...

BUT--THAT VOICE CALLING ME! WHOEVER WAS HERE MUST'VE LEFT IN A HURRY! UNLESS IT WAS JUST MY IMAGINATION! I'M GETTING AS BAD AS LUKE!



THAT WATER SURE LOOKS COLD AND FORBIDDING! BETTER GET THIS OVER WITH FAST!



AS I CUT DOWN THROUGH THE DARKNESS, TOO LATE I SAW A PARTIALLY SUBMERGED LOG IN THE GLITTERING WATER. MY HEAD STRUCK IT. A MILLION BELLS STARTED GONGING IN MY EARS. BRILLIANT LIGHTS FLASHED BEFORE MY EYES...



SEMI-CONSCIOUS, I FELT MYSELF SINKING INTO THE MURKY DEPTHS OF THE LAKE, THE SOFTLY EDDING WATER CLOSING AROUND ME IN A DEATH EMBRACE...



SPRAWLED HELPLESSLY ON THE LAKE-BOTTOM, I WAS UNABLE TO MOVE, BUT STILL PARTLY CONSCIOUS. THROUGH THE Eerie UNDER-WATER GLOW, I SAW A BEAUTIFUL GIRL, A STRANGER, SWIMMING TOWARD ME...



DON'T BE AFRAID, BOY! I'LL SAVE YOU!



I KNEW THAT IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO TALK UNDER WATER, YET I DISTINCTLY HEARD HER. WHEN SHE TOOK MY HAND, HELPED ME UP, SOME UNCONTROLLABLE POWER SEEMED TO FORCE ME TO OBEY HER COMMANDS...

COME WITH ME, ROY LYNN! I'LL SAVE YOUR LIFE IF YOU'LL DO A FAVOR FOR ME IN RETURN!



I FELT THAT THIS COULDN'T BE HAPPENING! THIS MUST BE SOME SEMI-CONSCIOUS DREAM, FOLLOWING MY HEAD INJURY. STILL, I WAS FILLED WITH A NAMELESS DREAD AS SHE LED ME TOWARD...

... AN UNDER-WATER CAVE!

THIS IS MY HOME! DON'T BE AFRAID, ROY! YOU'LL BE SAFE HERE! BUT BE CAREFUL! DON'T GET YOUR FOOT CAUGHT IN THE ROOTS!



INSIDE THIS CAVERN THERE WAS A DARK, TOMB-LIKE STILLNESS THERE WAS A STRANGE GLOW OVER EVERYTHING. MY PULSE WAS POUNDING WITH FEAR OF WHAT MIGHT BE AHEAD. I FELT AS THOUGH I WERE ABOUT TO LEARN SOME DREAD AND TIMELESS SECRET WHICH I WANTED TO KNOW—YET I WAS AFRAID...



WHO ARE YOU? HOW DO YOU KNOW MY NAME? WHAT IS THIS ALL ABOUT? YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY LIVE IN THIS—THIS AWFUL PLACE! NO HUMAN COULD!



MY NAME IS LOLA. I CAN'T ANSWER ALL YOUR QUESTIONS, ROY. THERE ARE SOME THINGS IT'S BETTER YOU NEVER KNOW, PERHAPS I DO NOT EVEN KNOW MYSELF. ALL I CAN TELL YOU IS THAT I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR SOMEONE TO COME. I NEED HELP!

THERE WAS A SAD, HAUNTING TONE TO HER VOICE AS SHE SHOWED ME AROUND HER CAVE-HOME. THERE WAS A NIGHTMARISH QUALITY ABOUT ALL THAT WAS HAPPENING, BUT AT THE SAME TIME, I SOMEHOW SENSED THAT IT WAS NOT A DREAM...

IT'S QUIET AND PEACEFUL, AND I'M HAPPY HERE, DOWN UNDER THE WATER OF THE LAKE, ROY, EXCEPT FOR ONE THING. I CAN'T SLEEP! I'M SO TERRIBLY TIRED! I MUST SLEEP, BUT I CAN'T UNLESS YOU WILL HELP ME!



SOMETHING'S PREYING ON MY MIND. IF I CAN GET IT OFF, I'LL REST PEACEFULLY. I'M WORRIED ABOUT ANDY. WHEN YOU LEAVE HERE, ROY, YOU'VE GOT TO FIND HIM, GIVE HIM A MESSAGE FROM ME, AND THEN PERHAPS I'LL BE ALL RIGHT!



I WATCHED HER REMOVE A RING, CARVED INTO THE SHAPE OF A MINIATURE SKULL, FROM HER FINGER...



I WAS WILL-LESS, UNABLE TO RESIST, AS SHE SLIPPED THE MACABRE-LOOKING RING ONTO MY OWN HAND...

THIS RING WILL PROVE TO ANDY THAT YOU'VE REALLY SEEN ME AND HE'LL KNOW THAT THE MESSAGE IS TRUE!



THIS IS INSANE! ANDY WHO? WHAT'S HIS LAST NAME? WHERE WILL I FIND HIM?

MY CONSTANT QUESTIONING SEEMED TO UPSET HER AND SHE COULDN'T ANSWER ME. ALL SHE SAID WAS...

FIND ANDY AND TELL HIM THAT LOLA FORGIVES HIM, DOESN'T BLAME HIM FOR WHAT HAPPENED! TELL HIM THAT I'M HAPPY AND AT PEACE. YOU'VE GOT TO DO THIS FOR ME, ROY, WITHOUT FURTHER QUESTIONS! IF I DON'T GET YOU OUT OF HERE SOON...



AS HER WORDS TRAILED OFF, THREATENINGLY, I QUICKLY AGREED TO DO AS SHE SAID. SHE SMILED AND SEEMED SATISFIED. WITHOUT ANOTHER WORD, SHE LED ME TO THE MOUTH OF THE CAVE, AND OUT INTO THE WATER AGAIN...



LOLA! WAIT! DON'T LEAVE ME OUT HERE ALONE! I-- I'LL DROWN!



GOOD-BY, ROY!



SUDDENLY MY LUNGS SEEMED ABOUT TO BURST. SOMETHING SEEMED TO EXPLODE IN MY HEAD. I FORGOT ABOUT LOLA AND THE STRANGE THINGS THAT HAD HAPPENED. I HAD ONLY ONE THOUGHT - TO FIGHT MY WAY TO THE SURFACE AND BREATHE AGAIN...



THAT WAS (GASP) A CLOSE CALL! ANOTHER FEW SECONDS DOWN THERE AND I'D HAVE BEEN A GONE!



ALREADY, LOLA AND THE UNDER-WATER CAVE WERE BEGINNING TO FADE AND BECOME CONFUSED AND UNREAL IN MY MIND. I TOLD MYSELF THAT IT HAD ALL BEEN A DREAM FANTASY RESULTING FROM THE BLOW ON THE HEAD I RECEIVED WHEN I STRUCK THE FLOATING LOG. I DRIED MYSELF OFF AND HURRIED BACK TO THE LODGE...



HEY! THAT WAS SOME SWIM YOU TOOK LAST NIGHT, ROY! YOU MUST'VE MET A BEAUTIFUL MERMAID, NOT COMING BACK FOR TWENTY-FOUR HOURS!

DON'T BE SILLY! ROY COULDN'T HAVE BEEN DOWN AT THE LAKE SINCE LAST NIGHT! HE MUST HAVE COME IN THE BACKWAY LAST NIGHT, AND GONE OUT THE SAME WAY AGAIN TONIGHT FOR ANOTHER SWIM! ISN'T THAT RIGHT, ROY?



THEIR LAUGHING WORDS CHANGED THE MARROW IN MY BONES TO ICE! WHAT WERE THEY TALKING ABOUT? I COULDN'T HAVE BEEN GONE 24 HOURS! IT WAS THE SAME NIGHT! IT HAD TO BE! I STARTED TO TELL THEM ABOUT WHAT HAD HAPPENED, BUT SOMETHING SEEMED TO STOP ME!

I--WELL, YES-- I GUESS IT--IT WAS SOMETHING LIKE THAT!



MY HORRIFIED GAZE SWEEPED TO THE WALL CALENDAR. I SAW THAT THEY WERE RIGHT. IT WAS ON WEDNESDAY, THE 13TH, THAT I HAD LEFT THIS ROOM AND GONE DOWN TO THE LAKE FOR THAT LATE SWIM...

I WENT TO MY ROOM, SICK WITH WORRY, MY HEAD THROBING. THE BIZARRE EVENTS THAT HAD HAPPENED KEPT RETURNING TO MY MIND. I PACED THE ROOM, CONVINCED THAT MY BRAIN HAD BEEN SERIOUSLY INJURED WHEN MY HEAD STRUCK THE FLOATING LOG. DETERMINED TO SEE A DOCTOR IN THE MORNING, I FLUNG MYSELF ON THE BED FOR A LAST SMOKE BEFORE FALLING INTO AN EXHAUSTED, NIGHTMARE-RIDDEN SLUMBER...



BRIGHT AND EARLY THE NEXT MORNING, I VISITED THE OFFICE OF THE ONLY LOCAL DOCTOR. A WORRIED-LOOKING MAN ONLY A LITTLE OLDER THAN MYSELF...

DR. MANNING? YES, SIR. COME RIGHTIN'!



BRIEFLY AND CALMLY AS POSSIBLE, I RELATED TO HIM ALL THE EVENTS OF THE NIGHT AT THE LAKE. RIGHT FROM THE FIRST, I NOTICED THAT HIS PROFESSIONAL CALM WAS VISIBLY DISTURBED BY MY STORY...

BUT THAT--THAT'S PREPOSTEROUS, MR. LYNN. I--I'M AFRAID YOU'RE SUFFERING FROM HALLUCINATIONS! I'LL MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR TESTS AND SKULL X-RAYS...



THIS WORDS JAMMED IN HIS THROAT AS I REMOVED THE RING LOLA HAD GIVEN ME AND SHOWED IT TO HIM. HE GAVE A CHOKING, STRANGLERD CRY OF RECOGNITION!

MY MEDICAL SCHOOL FRATERNITY RING! THE ONE I GAVE LOLA! NO! NO!



THIS-- THIS IS TOO MUCH! I THOUGHT AT FIRST YOUR STORY WAS SOME KIND OF HOAX, BUT NOW I KNOW IT CAN'T BE. YOU SEE, MY-- MY FIRST NAME IS ANDY! I'M THE ONE LOLA WAS TALKING ABOUT! SHE WAS WEARING THAT BING THE NIGHT THAT SHE DISAPPEARED-- TEN YEARS AGO!

DR. ANDY MANNING TOLD A STRANGE STORY. HE AND LOLA WALTERS HAD BEEN ENGAGED. THEY HAD QUARRELED VIOLENTLY ONE NIGHT OVER ANDY'S POSTPONING THEIR MARRIAGE UNTIL AFTER HIS INTERNSHIP WAS UP. FOR SEVERAL DAYS LOLA WAS DESPONDENT, AND ANDY WAS TOO STUBBORN TO GIVE IN. HE NEVER SAW HER AGAIN. SHE WENT SWIMMING ONE NIGHT AT THE LAKE WITH A GROUP OF FRIENDS. SHE WENT OUT TOO FAR. SOMEONE HEARD HER CRY OUT, BUT SHE NEVER CAME BACK. IT WAS NEVER KNOWN WHETHER SHE DROWNED OR SWAM BACK TO SHORE AT SOME OTHER POINT AND THEN DISAPPEARED...

THEY DRAGGED THE LAKE, LOOKING FOR HER ALL THAT WEEK. NOTHING WAS EVER FOUND. AS TIME WENT ON, I TRIED TO FORGET HER, BUT I COULDN'T. I'VE WORRIED ABOUT WHAT REALLY HAPPENED TO HER. I FELT GUILTY THAT IT WAS ALL MY FAULT. IF I HADN'T BEEN SUCH A STUBBORN FOOL...

LOLA TOLD ME THAT IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT, DOC! YOU CAN STOP TORTURING YOURSELF NOW!

YES, IF WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE! BUT IS IT HOW COULD IT BE?

I'M NOT SURE, BUT SOMEHOW I THINK THAT IT IS!

WE DECIDED THAT THERE WAS ONLY ONE WAY OF FINDING OUT. TOGETHER WE WENT TO A SPORTING GOODS STORE, AND PURCHASED A PAIR OF DIVING HELMETS...

THESE OUGHT TO DO THE TRICK!

MAYBE WE'D BETTER FORGET THE WHOLE THING, DOC.

BUT I COULDN'T TALK HIM OUT OF IT. DR. MANNING SAID HE'D NEVER REST UNTIL HE'D CHECKED ON MY STORY, SO AN HOUR LATER, WE PREPARED TO DESCEND TOGETHER INTO THE COLD, SECRET WATERS OF THE LAKE...

IN THE MURKY, SHADOW WORLD OF THE LAKE BOTTOM, I LED THE WAY IN WHAT I HOPED WAS THE DIRECTION OF THE CAVE. MY HEART WAS LEAPING LIKE A WILD THING, MY STOMACH WAS LIKE A LUMP OF LEAD, AS I DREADED WHAT WE MIGHT, OR MIGHT NOT, FIND!



WEAK-KNEED AND TREMBLING, AS WE FOUND THE UNDER-WATER CAVERN, I FORCED MYSELF TO LEAD DOC INSIDE. WE WERE BOTH ON THE EDGE OF PANIC AS WE MOVED THROUGH THE OMINOUSLY PRESSING SILENCE OF THE SWIRLING WATER...



THE HORRIBLE SIGHT THAT WE GAZED DOWN UPON IN THE DIMNESS OF THE UNDER-WATER CAVE WAS TOO MUCH FOR THE DOCTOR! HIS LEGS GAVE WAY AND HE WOULD HAVE FALLEN IF I HADN'T CAUGHT HIM. ALL THAT REMAINED OF HIS BELOVED LOLA WAS A NEST OF OLD BONES AND THE FLOWING MANE OF HER LONG RED HAIR. HER FOOT HAD BEEN PINNED DOWN BY A TWISTED ROOT!



THE DOCTOR QUICKLY RECOVERED, BUT BEFORE I COULD GET HIM TO LEAVE, HE INSISTED ON ONE FAREWELL GESTURE. HE SLIPPED THE RING BACK ONTO WHAT HAD ONCE BEEN LOLA'S FINGER!



AFTER THAT, WE LOST NO TIME MAKING OUR WAY TO THE SURFACE AGAIN. BOTH TREMBLING LIKE A GHOST-MOON, WE EMERGED INTO THE WELCOME WARMTH OF DAYLIGHT AND CLIMBED BACK ONTO THE PIER...

HURRY, DOC! WE'VE GOT TO GET RID OF THIS DIVING EQUIPMENT BEFORE SOMEBODY SPOTS US AND STARTS ASKING A LOT OF QUESTIONS WE CAN'T ANSWER!



WE DRESSED AND RETURNED TO DR. MANNING'S OFFICE, WHERE WE TALKED THE WHOLE THING OVER AND DECIDED THAT NEITHER OF US WOULD MENTION THE MATTER TO ANYONE, EVER. IT WAS BETTER THAT WAY. WE DID NOT WANT TO BE BRANDED AS MADMEN. IN A FEW MINUTES THEN, I STARTED TO LEAVE...

IT WAS A HORRIBLE SHOCK, ROY, BUT IN SOME WAYS I FEEL BETTER ALREADY, AS THOUGH A WEIGHT WAS LIFTED FROM MY MIND! SOMETIMES I WONDER IF WE HUMANS—EVEN DOCTORS—KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT LIFE—OR DEATH! GOOD-BY, ROY!

SO LONG, DOC!



AS I LEFT THE DOC'S OFFICE, I, TOO, FELT STRANGELY AT PEACE. I SOMEHOW DIDN'T THINK I'D HAVE ANY TROUBLE SLEEPING AGAIN. AND AS I WALKED BACK TO THE LODGE, I SEEMED TO HEAR LOLA'S SOFT SAD VOICE WHISPERING IN MY EARS: "THANK YOU, ROY!"

BACK AT LOON LAKE LODGE I PACKED AND QUICKLY LEFT. THE SUNSET WAS SPREADING AN EERIE GLOW OVER EVERYTHING AND THE WIND WAS SIGHING THROUGH THE TREES. I FOUGHT OFF THE CHILL THAT SHOOK ME AND I KNEW THAT I WOULD NEVER COME HERE AGAIN. AS I WALKED AWAY, I DIDN'T EVEN LOOK BACK. I DIDN'T DARE!



THE END!

TRUE TALES of UNEXPLAINED MYSTERY

IT WAS A DREARY DAY IN LONDON, ON OCTOBER 18TH, 1902, WHEN ELDERLY GRAHAM HILLIARD PASSED AWAY AFTER A LONG SIEGE OF ILLNESS. MANY WERE THOSE WHO CAME TO MOURN AT HIS FUNERAL, FOR IT WAS EXPECTED THAT THE GENEROUS HILLIARD WOULD LEAVE MANY HEIRS...

SEVERAL DAYS LATER, MANY FRIENDS, RELATIVES, AND SERVANTS WERE CALLED INTO THE HILLIARD LIBRARY FOR THE READING OF THE WILL.

...AND TO MY EVER FAITHFUL COOK, MARY STANDISH, I LEAVE FIVE THOUSAND POUNDS!



(SNIFF) AHH—MR. HILLIARD WAS A GENEROUS MAN!

BUT SUDDENLY A STRANGE THING HAPPENED!

GREAT SCOTT! LOOK! THE PORTRAIT... THE SMILE HAS CHANGED TO A FROWN!



WHY... YOU'RE RIGHT! BUT WHAT HOW...?

IT'S AN EVIL OMEN!

WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF IT, LESLIE? I--I'M NOT SURE! BUT I DO KNOW MY UNCLE BELIEVED IN THE OCCULT! THIS MAY BE SOME MESSAGE HE'S TRYING TO SEND US FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE! PERHAPS SOMETHING ABOUT THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS DEATH! I THINK HE SHOULD BE DISINTERRED!



NO! NO! IT'S SACRILEGIOUS!

AT LESLIE HILLIARD'S INSISTENCE, THE BODY OF GRAHAM HILLIARD, HIS UNCLE, WAS TAKEN FROM THE GRAVE AND SENT TO THE LOCAL CORONER'S LABORATORY...

BEING IN EXTREME ILL HEALTH, IT HAD BEEN ASSUMED THAT YOUR UNCLE DIED NATURALLY. HOWEVER, MY AUTOPSY SHOWS HE WAS POISONED!



YOU MEAN... MURDERED? BUT HOW... BY WHOM?

AFTER BRIEF QUESTIONING, GRAHAM HILLIARD'S PRIVATE NURSE WAS IMMEDIATELY RULED OUT AS A SUSPECT, THEN...

YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE WHO PREPARED HIS FOOD. ADMIT IT! YOU ADMINISTERED THE POISON!

ALL RIGHT... I DID IT! I KNEW HE WAS LEAVING ME THE MONEY AND I WANTED IT SOONER! BUT HE WAS GOING TO DIE ANYWAY!



BY HER CONFESSION, MARY STANDISH WAS SENTENCED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT. LATER, BACK IN THE LIBRARY...

SEE? THE PORTRAIT IS SMILING AGAIN! HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR MIND NOW ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF STRANGE POWERS?



I'M CONFUSED. AND YET... I SAW IT HAPPEN! HOW CAN ANYONE EXPLAIN AN OCCURRENCE WITHOUT ANY POSSIBLE EXPLANATION?

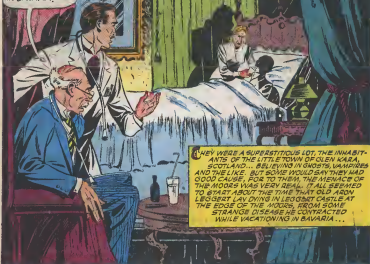
WHO CAN EXPLAIN THE STRANGE INCIDENT OF A PORTRAIT WHOSE SUBJECT'S SMILE WAS SEEN TO CHANGE TO A FROWN FOR ONE BRIEF MOMENT, UNTIL HIS MURDER SHOULD BE INVESTIGATED? JUST ANOTHER UNEXPLAINED MYSTERY IN THE ANNALS OF THE SUPERNATURAL!



LEGACY OF THE ACCURSED

IT'S BEYOND ME! I JUST CAN'T DIAGNOSE HIS ILLNESS! I'VE GIVEN HIM SEVERAL TRANSFUSIONS... BUT IT DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ENOUGH. AND HE REFUSES TO TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED IN BAVARIA!

HE'S GOING FAST! THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO!



THEY WERE A SUPERSTITIOUS LOT, THE INHABITANTS OF THE LITTLE TOWN OF OLEN KARA, SCOTLAND... BELIEVING IN GHOSTS, VAMPIRES AND THE LIKE. BUT SOME WOULD SAY THEY HAD GOOD CAUSE, FOR TO THEM, THE MENACE OF THE MOORS WAS VERY REAL. IT ALL SEEMED TO START ABOUT THE TIME THAT OLD ARON LEGGERT LAY DYING IN LEGGERT CASTLE AT THE EDGE OF THE MOORS, FROM SOME STRANGE DISEASE HE CONTRACTED WHILE VACATIONING IN BAVARIA...

OH! DOCTOR— DOCTOR! COME QUICKLY! I THINK HE'S...

EH? GREAT SCOTT! LOOKS LIKE HE'S FAINTED!



NO-- NOT FAINTED... HE'S DEAD!

AHH... TOO BAD, TOO BAD. I FEAR WE'LL NEVER KNOW THE CAUSE NOW. HE WASN'T TOO OLD, YOU KNOW. IN HIS EARLY FIFTIES.



SEVERAL HOURS LATER, IN LONDON, ARON'S NIECE RECEIVED A TELEGRAM FROM ARON'S LAWYER, SILAS HAMMOND...

OH, GEOFF... HOW DREADFUL! UNCLE ARON'S DEAD! I--I MUST GO TO SCOTLAND AT ONCE FOR THE FUNERAL!

WAIT A MINUTE, DARLING. IT'S A LONG TRIP... AND YOU'LL HAVE TO PACK SOME THINGS. WAIT TILL TOMORROW. I'LL GO ALONG.



AND THE NEXT DAY...

IT'S SO ODD. THE TELEGRAM SAID I WAS HIS ONLY HEIR. BUT I'D ONLY SEEN HIM ONCE IN MY LIFE... AND I WAS SO YOUNG THEN THAT I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER WHAT UNCLE ARON LOOKED LIKE!

HE MUST'VE FALLEN FOR YOU AT FIRST SIGHT... JUST LIKE I DID!



...ASHES TO ASHES... DUST TO DUST...

THANK GOODNESS WE'RE HERE... ALTHOUGH I'M SOZIE WE HAD TO MISS THE SERVICES.



EXCUSE ME... I'M MAUREEN LEGGETT. I'M AFRAID I'VE ARRIVED A LITTLE LATE!

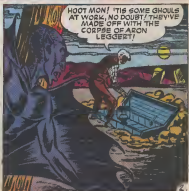
YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY. MR. HAMMOND HAS REQUESTED THAT YOU STAY ON AT LEGGETT CASTLE. HE WILL CONTACT YOU THERE SHORTLY.



BUT THAT NIGHT, AS MAUREEN AND GEOFF WERE MADE COMFORTABLE AT LEGGETT CASTLE, ALL WAS NOT PEACEFUL AT THE CEMETERY...



BUT WHAT'S THAT NOISE? SOUNDS LIKE A PROWLER!



HOOT MON! 'TIS SOME GHOULS AT WORK, NO DOUBT! THEY'VE MADE OFF WITH THE CORPSE OF ARON LEGGETT!



NO! NO!
AARGHHH!



THE NEXT MORNING, THE LIFELESS BODY OF
THE WATCHMAN WAS FOUND!

HORRIBLE...
HORRIBLE!

WHO COULD HAVE
COMMITTED SUCH
AN OUTRAGE?

LOOK AT THE
MARKS ON
HIS THROAT!
'T WAS A
VAMPIRE!

I DISLIKE ADDING TO
YOUR GRIEF, MISS
LEGGERT... BUT I
THOUGHT YOU'D
WANT TO KNOW.
WHOEVER IT WAS
KILLED THE WATCH-
MAN, ALSO DUG
UP YOUR UNCLE'S
BODY AND STOLE IT!

HOW TERRIBLE!
PLEASE KEEP ME
INFORMED OF
ANY NEW
DEVELOPMENTS!



EARLY THAT EVENING, A PHONE
CALL CAME FOR MAUREEN...

OH, YES, MR.
HAMMOND...
YES, I'VE
BEEN
AWAITING
YOUR
CALL!

I'VE BEEN
AWAY ON BUSI-
NESS AWKLE.
I'LL DROP IN ON
YOU A LITTLE
LATER THIS EVEN-
ING. BY THE WAY,
IT WAS YOUR
UNCLE'S WISH
THAT THE SERVANTS
BE DISCHARGED
ON HIS DECEASE.
WILL YOU PLEASE
TAKE CARE OF IT
IMMEDIATELY?



MUCH LATER, AFTER DIS-
CHARGING THE SERVANTS,
MAUREEN ADMITTED
A CALLER...

MISS LEGGERT? I'M
GILAS HAMMOND, YOUR
UNCLE'S LAWYER. I'M
SORRY I COULDN'T GET
HERE SOMETIME DURING
THE DAY.

I UNDER-
STAND, MR.
HAMMOND.
YOU MUST
BE VERY
BUSY!



WAIT! THAT
MIRROR! TAKE
IT AWAY!
WHERE
DID IT
COME
FROM?

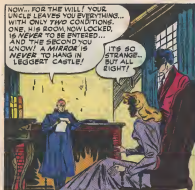
WH--WHY, I NOTICED THAT THERE
WERE NO MIRRORS IN THE ENTIRE
CASTLE... AND I FOUND THIS ONE
IN THE STORE ROOM AND DECIDED
IT WOULD BE AN IMPROVEMENT.
BUT... WHAT'S WRONG?



ER--UH-- EXCUSE ME
FOR BECOMING SO
EXCITED. IT WAS
YOUR UNCLE. HE
DETESTED MIRRORS!
JUST AN IDIOSYNCRASY.
EVEN MADE IT PART
OF HIS WILL. NO
MIRRORS ARE
EVER TO HANG
IN LEGGERT
CASTLE!

OHH! I'LL
REMOVE
IT AT
ONCE!





HE-- HE'S NOT DEAD! HE SEEMS TO BE IN A COMA! LOOK AT THE RING HE'S WEARING... THE INITIALS... S.H.!

S.H. ... SILAS HAMMOND! BUT IF THIS IS SILAS HAMMOND, WHO WAS THE MAN WHO JUST LEFT? OH, GEOFF, WE'D BETTER CALL THE POLICE!

SHORTLY AFTER, THE POLICE RESPONDED TO A FRANTIC PHONE CALL...

WELL, I'LL BE... IT'S SILAS HAMMOND!

THEN WHO WAS THE MAN WHO WAS HERE TONIGHT, CLAIMING TO BE SILAS HAMMOND?

WHAT DID HE LOOK LIKE?

WELL, I'D SAY HE WAS ABOUT FIVE FEET EIGHT... QUITE BALD. HIS CHEEKS WERE SUNKEN IN AND HE HAD A THIN, BONY NOSE AND DARK SUNKEN-IN EYES. HIS PHYSIQUE WAS AVERAGE.

WHY, THAT'S-- A DESCRIPTION OF-- ARON LEGGERT!

WH-- WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

IT MEANS YOUR UNCLE IS NOT DEAD! HE'S A VAMPIRE! SEE THOSE TEETH MARKS ON HAMMOND'S THROAT? IT WAS THE SAME WITH THE WATCHMAN!

THAT'S RIDICULOUS! VAMPIRES DON'T EXIST!

OH, NO? THEN HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THE MURDER OF A YOUNG GIRL ON THE MOORS BEFORE I GOT HERE TONIGHT? SHE HAD THOSE SAME MARKS ON HER THROAT!

ON THE MOORS? WHY, THAT'S WHERE HE HEADED WHEN WE LEFT HERE!

THEN THAT'S WHERE HE MUST BE HIDING OUT. YOU MEN! CALL GLEN KARA! HAVE A SQUAD SEARCH THE MOORS FROM THE OTHER SIDE! WE'LL TRY TO CLOSE IN ON HIM FROM HERE!

DO YOU MIND IF I JOIN YOU? YOU'LL NEED ALL THE HELP YOU CAN GET!

I DON'T KNOW! IT ISN'T SAFE TO LEAVE MISS LEGGERT HERE ALONE!

OH, SHE'LL BE ALL RIGHT-- WON'T YOU, DEAR? AFTER ALL, HE WON'T BE HEADING BACK IN THIS DIRECTION WHILE WE CLOSE IN ON HIM!

OF COURSE, I'LL BE ALL RIGHT... BUT THIS IS ALL SUCH A SHOCK!

FOR SEVERAL HOURS THE SMALL GROUP CAREFULLY COMBED THE MOORS FOR ANY SIGN OF THE MENACE...

FOUND ANYTHING YET?

NOT A SIGN! IT'LL BE DAYLIGHT SOON!

SUDDENLY, A GREAT FLURRY OF WINDS WAS HEARD...

GREAT SCOTT, CHIEF! LOOK... UP THERE!

A BAT! IT MUST BE HIM! IT'S HEADING TOWARD THE CASTLE!

COME ON...AFTER IT! MAUREEN IS ALL ALONE IN THE CASTLE!

BUT THE HORRIBLE BEATING WINGS SOON OUT-DISTANCED THE FURBLING MEN! AND SOON, AT THE DARKENED CASTLE...

WHAT...WHO'S THERE? YOU! THEN--THEN IT IS TRUE! DON'T COME ANY CLOSER! I-- I'LL SCREAM!

IT WILL AVAIL YOU LITTLE! I LEFT THEM SCAMPING OVER THE MOORS. BESIDES, IS THAT THE ATTITUDE TO TAKE TOWARDS YOUR UNCLE?

STAY AWAY! HELP! HELP!

HA/HA/HA! THERE IS NO ESCAPE FOR YOU! THEY CAN'T HEAR YOU, MAUREEN!

LOOKS AS THOUGH YOU'VE TRAPPED YOURSELF, MY DEAR!

OHNN!



AHH! SHE'S FAINTED! I'LL MAKE IT THAT MUCH EASIER TO DRAW HER BLOOD! WHAT'S THAT VOICES?



MAUREEN! IF HE'S HARMED YOU, I'LL...

THERE HE GOES... THROUGH THE WINDOW!



OH... GEORGE! IT WAS... HORRIBLE!

GOT AWAY! SEEMS TO HAVE FLOWN AROUND THE CORNER OF THE CASTLE!

WAIT! I HAVE IT! ARON'S ROOM... DOWN THE HALL! IT'S GROWING LIGHT... AND VAMPIRES CAN'T EXIST IN DAYLIGHT!



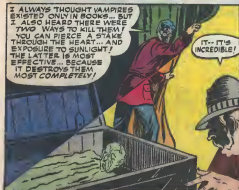
IT'S LOCKED... WE'LL HAVE TO BREAK IT DOWN! UGH... AGAIN... UGH... THERE!



THE CHAMBER WAS ENTIRELY BARE, EXCEPT FOR A LONE COFFIN. QUICKLY, GEORGE OPENED IT, AND INSIDE...

THERE'S YOUR VAMPIRE! NOW OPEN THE DRAPES AND LET THE SUN IN!

I--I DON'T UNDERSTAND! WHY?



I ALWAYS THOUGHT VAMPIRES EXISTED ONLY IN BOOKS... BUT I ALSO HEARD THERE WERE TWO WAYS TO KILL THEM! YOU CAN PIERCE A STAKE THROUGH THE HEART... AND EXPOSURE TO SUNLIGHT! THE LATTER IS MOST EFFECTIVE... BECAUSE IT DESTROYS THEM MOST COMPLETELY!

IT--IT'S INCREDIBLE!



AND TO THINK... JUST A FEW MINUTES AGO HE TRIED TO KILL ME!

THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT NOW, SWEETHEART! AND AFTER TONIGHT'S ADVENTURE, YOU CAN LIVE IN THE CASTLE WITHOUT FEAR. THE AFFLICTION YOUR UNCLE ARON CAUGHT IN BAVARIA, WHICH MADE A VAMPIRE OF HIM, HAS BEEN DESTROYED WITH THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE CORPSE! IT'S ALL OVER NOW!

TRUE TALES of UNEXPLAINED MYSTERY

ON A COLD WINTER'S DAY IN 1872 IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC, THE FREIGHTER LIVERPOOL LUCY WAS CUTTING THROUGH THE ICY WATERS ON ITS VOYAGE FROM ENGLAND TO LABRADOR. FROM ABOVE, CAPTAIN GARCY INSTRUCTED FIRST MATE JANNEY TO FETCH SOME IMPORTANT PAPERS FROM HIS CABIN. BUT WHEN JANNEY ENTERED THE CAPTAIN'S CABIN...



HERE NOW... WHAT ARE YOU DOIN' IN THE CAPTAIN'S CABIN? EH? WHO ARE YOU? WELL, WHY DON'T YOU ANSWER ME?

FRIGHTENED BY THE GHOST-LIKE APPARITION, JANNEY IMMEDIATELY RETURNED TO THE BRIDGE...

CAPTAIN GARCY, SIR... THERE'S A STRANGE MAN IN YOUR CABIN! HE LOOKED LIKE A GHOST, HE DID! AND HE'S NOT ONE OF THE CREW, EITHER!

WHAT NONSENSE IS THIS, MR. JANNEY? WE HAVE NO PASSENGERS!

AT JANNEY'S INSISTENCE, CAPTAIN GARCY RETURNED WITH HIM TO THE CABIN...

HE'S GONE, SIR! BUT I SAW HIM! SEATED AT YOUR DESK HE WAS, SIR. PLAIN AS DAY! AND HE WAS WRITIN'!

WELL, THERE'S NO ONE HERE NOW. WAIT... ON THE DESK! THERE'S A PIECE OF PAPER, THERE!



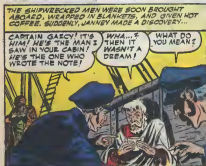
WHY... ALL IT SAYS IS "STEER WEST NORTH-WEST", SIR! BUT THAT WOULD TAKE US OFF OUR COURSE. WHAT'S IT MEAN, SIR?

I DON'T KNOW, MR. JANNEY... I DON'T KNOW. BUT THERE'S SOMETHING VERY STRANGE HERE! INSTRUCT THE PILOT TO STEER WEST NORTH-WEST IMMEDIATELY!



FOR SEVERAL HOURS THE LIVERPOOL LUCY STEERED ON A WEST NORTHWEST COURSE. SUDDENLY, CAPTAIN GARCY RAISED HIS BINOCULARS...

SUMMON ALL HANDS! THERE'S A BOAT ADRIFT... LOOKS LIKE THE MEN ARE NEAR FROZEN! PREPARE TO TAKE 'EM ABOARD!

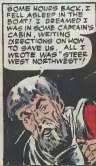


THE SHIPWRECKED MEN WERE SOON BROUGHT ABOARD, WRAPPED IN BLANKETS, AND GIVEN HOT COFFEE. SUDDENLY, JANNEY MADE A DISCOVERY...

CAPTAIN GARCY! IT'S HIM! HE'S THE MAN I SAW IN YOUR CABIN! HE'S THE ONE WHO WROTE THE NOTE!

WHA...? THEN IT WASN'T A DREAM!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?



SOME HOURS BACK, I FELL ASLEEP IN THE BOAT! I DREAMED I WAS IN SOME CAPTAIN'S CABIN, WRITING DIRECTIONS ON HOW TO SAVE US. ALL I WROTE WAS "STEER WEST NORTHWEST"!

THIS IS ONE OF THE STRANGEST CASES OF "DREAM TRANSFERENCE" ON RECORD. NO ONE INVOLVED IN THIS UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE COULD OFFER A SOLUTION TO THE MYSTERY! HOW WOULD YOU EXPLAIN IT, READERS?



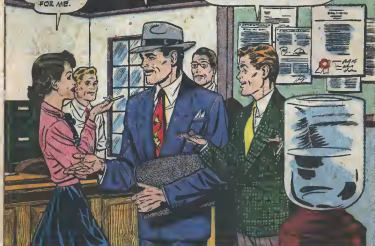
THE UNSEEN HOST

"YEAH, THAT'S WHAT I SAID... I WAS MURDERED! SOUNDS CRAZY? WELL, MAYBE I'D BETTER TELL YOU THE WHOLE STORY AND YOU CAN JUDGE FOR YOURSELF. IT WAS A COOL AUTUMN DAY, AND I, HANK REYNOLDS, OWNER OF A SMALL, SUCCESSFUL PUBLISHING COMPANY, WAS LEAVING EARLY TO GO ON A HUNTING TRIP FOR THE WEEKEND. I BID MY OFFICE STAFF GOOD-BY, LITTLE KNOWING WHAT WAS IN STORE FOR ME..."

SO LONG, MR. REYNOLDS. DON'T FORGET TO BRING BACK A DEER FOR ME.

NO CAN DO, DOTTY... I'M GOING FOR MALLARDS THIS TRIP.

DEER! MALLARDS! WHAT'S THE DIFF? SO YOU'LL INVITE THE WHOLE GANG OVER FOR A DUCK DINNER WHEN YOU GET BACK. GOOD LUCK, BOSS!



"THAT WAS LAST THURSDAY. WHEN I RETURNED TO THE OFFICE MONDAY MORNING, I WAS IN FOR QUITE A SHOCK..."

NBODY'S HERE. TODAY ISN'T A HOLIDAY. I WONDER WHY...?



"BUT THAT WASN'T HALF AS STRANGE AS WHAT I FOUND WHEN I APPROACHED MY OFFICE DOOR..."

SAY, WHAT IS THIS? LOOKS AS IF SOMEONE'S GOT THE IDEA THAT I'M DEAD. WHAT'S THAT WREATH DOING ON MY DOOR?



"AS I TURNED TO LEAVE, MY EYE WAS SUDDENLY ATTRACTED TO THE HEADLINES OF LAST FRIDAY'S NEWSPAPER ON MY SECRETARY'S DESK..."



WHAT'S THIS TRAIN WRECK KILLS ME? I HAVEN'T HEARD ABOUT ANY TRAIN WRECKS!

WHY... THIS IS ABOUT THE TRAIN? TOOK! BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! I WAS ON THE TRAIN... IT HAPPENED AT 1:30 A.M. I WAS SLEEPING AT THE TIME. I CERTAINLY WOULD HAVE AWAKENED IF THERE WAS A WRECK!



OH! HERE'S A LIST OF CASUALTIES. THIS SHOULD STRAIGHTEN THE WHOLE THING OUT... HEY! MY NAME! IT'S THERE! AND MY FUNERAL IS SUPPOSED TO BE TODAY!

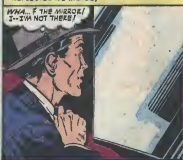


"I DECIDED TO GO TO THE FUNERAL PARLOR AND SEE WHAT WAS GOING ON!"



THIS ENTIRE BUSINESS IS RIDICULOUS! I CERTAINLY WOULDN'T BE HERE IF I WERE DEAD!

"BEFORE I LEFT, I PAUSED FOR A MOMENT TO STRAIGHTEN MY TIE IN FRONT OF THE MIRROR. (IMAGINE MY CONSTERNATION AS THE MIRROR REFLECTED NO IMAGE!)"



WHA... F THE MIRROR! I--I'M NOT THERE!

SAY, WHAT'S GOING ON HERE ANYWAY? AM I SUPPOSED TO BE A GHOST?



"I HAD TO SETTLE THIS ONCE AND FOR ALL! AS MY OFFICES WERE ON THE SECOND FLOOR, I HAD RARELY, IF EVER, TAKEN THE ELEVATOR. BUT NOW I PUSHED THE BUTTON. I HAD TO SEE AND TALK TO SOMEONE IN PERSON!"



HELLO, JIMMY! HOW ARE YOU FEELING THIS MORNING? I THOUGHT I'D RIDE DOWN THIS TIME INSTEAD OF WALKING...



PEOPLE SURE ARE FUNNY... ALWAYS IN A HURRY! FIRST THEY RING THE BUZZER... THEN THEY DECIDE TO WALK DOWN!



HE--HE CAN'T SEE ME!

I LEAPED THROUGH THE DOORS BEFORE THEY SLAMMED SHUT AND TRIED TO STRIKE UP A CONVERSATION WITH JIMMY, THE ELEVATOR BOY, BUT I WAS IGNORED! IT WAS AS IF I WEREN'T THERE!

SHAME ABOUT MR. REYNOLDS GETTIN' KILLED IN THAT WRECK. HE WAS A NICE GUY.



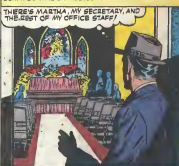
YEAH! TOUGH BREAK!

"I WAS A NICE GUY," THOSE WORDS RUNG IN MY EARS. I TRIED TO HAIL A CAB OUTSIDE, BUT I GUESS THE HACKIES COULDN'T SEE ME EITHER! I DECIDED TO WALK TO THE FUNERAL PARLOR.



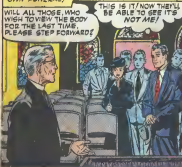
CAB! HEY, CAB... OVER HERE! OH, IT'S NO USE!

"WHEN I FINALLY GOT THERE, I HAD ALREADY ANTICIPATED WHAT I WOULD FIND. ALL ELEMENT OF SURPRISE WAS EXHAUSTED WITHIN ME..."



THERE'S MARTHA, MY SECRETARY, AND THE REST OF MY OFFICE STAFF!

"AS I STOOD THERE NEXT TO MARTHA, I WONDERED IF I WERE THE ONLY MAN EVER TO ATTEND HIS OWN FUNERAL!"



WILL ALL THOSE WHO WISH TO VIEW THE BODY FOR THE LAST TIME, PLEASE STEP FORWARD!

THIS IS IT! NOW THEY'LL BE ABLE TO SEE IT'S NOT ME!

"THEN A STRANGE THING HAPPENED. AS MARTHA STEPPED OUT INTO THE AILE, SHE SEEMED TO PASS RIGHT THROUGH ME!"



WHY DOESN'T THIS LINE MOVE FASTER? THE WAY THEY'RE MOVING UP FRONT, THEY SEEM TO SEE JUST WHAT THEY EXPECTED... MY BODY! BUT IT CAN'T BE IN THERE!



"BUT, WHEN I LOOKED INTO THE COFFIN, MY WORST FEARS WERE CONFIRMED. IT WAS MY BODY! IT WAS TRUE! I WAS DEAD!"



"AND YET, SOMEHOW I STILL COULDN'T ACCEPT THE FACT! EVEN THE SIGHT OF MY OWN BODY, LYING THERE, STILL IN DEATH, COULDN'T PENETRATE! THERE WAS ONLY ONE PERSON, I COULD TURN TO... BRAD PATTON, MY LAWYER AND OLD COLLEGE ROOMMATE."



"I'D KNOWN BRAD OVER TWELVE YEARS. HE WAS MY CLOSEST FRIEND IN ADDITION TO BEING MY LAWYER..."

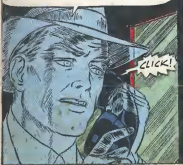
BRAD! HE'S MY LAST HOPE... BUT WHY WASN'T HE AT THE FUNERAL SERVICES?



HELLO, BRAD? LISTEN... THIS IS HANK. SOMETHING CRAZY'S GOING ON...



BRAD... IT'S ME! IT'S REALLY ME! BELIEVE ME... I'M NOT DEAD... BUT I NEED YOUR HELP, BRAD. BRAD! CAN YOU HEAR ME? HE HUNG UP!



WHAT CAN I DO? BRAD IS THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN HELP ME, BUT HE CAN'T HEAR ME! MAYBE IF I GO OVER TO HIS OFFICE...



"I RAN AS FAST AS I COULD, BUT WHEN I ENTERED BRAD'S OUTER OFFICE, I HEARD A SURPRISING THING!"

MISS GATES, I WANT YOU TO CONTACT ALL OF MR. REYNOLDS' BUSINESS ASSOCIATES AND EXECUTIVE STAFF. TELL THEM I WANT THEM HERE TOMORROW AFTERNOON FOR THE READING OF MR. REYNOLDS' WILL!



"SINCE I FIRST WENT INTO THE PUBLISHING BUSINESS, I LET BRAD HANDLE ALL MY LEGAL AFFAIRS. HE WAS ALWAYS HANDING ME PAPERS TO SIGN..."

WHAT'S THIS? MORE TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS?

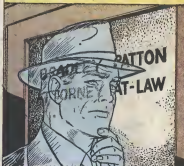
YOU'LL HAVE TO SIGN 'EM IF YOU WANT TO STAY IN BUSINESS, HANK. I'VE GONE OVER 'EM. THEY'RE OKAY.



WHY, AFTER 12 YEARS OF SUCH CLOSE FRIENDSHIP, WOULD BRAD DELIBERATELY TRICK ME INTO SIGNING A FALSE WILL? WE WERE LIKE BROTHERS AND... OH, I'M JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS. I'LL WAIT TILL TOMORROW AFTERNOON AND SEE!

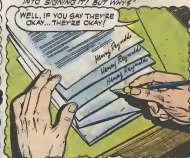


"I WAS SHOCKED AT THIS TURN OF EVENTS... SHOCKED BECAUSE I KNEW THAT I HAD NEVER MADE A WILL!"



"AND I ALWAYS HAD TRUSTED BRAD. I DIDN'T KNOW THE CONTENTS OF ONE-TENTH OF THE PAPERS I SIGNED. AND IF BRAD HAD MY WILL, HE'D EITHER FORGED IT OR TRICKED ME INTO SIGNING IT! BUT WHY?"

WELL, IF YOU SAY THEY'RE OKAY... THEY'RE OKAY!



"IT SEEMED LIKE AN ETERNITY TILL THE NEXT AFTERNOON, BUT I WAS THERE WAITING, INVISIBLE TO BRAD'S EYES."

MR. REYNOLDS' BUSINESS ASSOCIATES AND EXECUTIVE STAFF ARE HERE, MR. PATTON. SHALL I SEND THEM IN?

YES... PLEASE DO!



I CALLED YOU ALL DOWN HERE FOR THE READING OF HANK'S WILL BECAUSE MOST OF YOU WERE AN INTEGRAL PART OF HIS BUSINESS AND MAY BE UNDER THE ASSUMPTION THAT WITH HANK'S DEATH THE BUSINESS WILL DISSOLVE.

WELL, I'LL BE...!
IT IS MY SIGNATURE!



SO THAT WAS IT! NO LIVING RELATIVES...NO ONE TO CONTEST THE WILL...WHICH NO DOUBT LEFT EVERY EARTHLY POSSESSION TO BRAD!

...I, THEREFORE, LEAVE EVERYTHING I OWN, BUSINESS AND PERSONAL, TO MY DEAREST AND CLOSEST FRIEND, BRAD PATTON.



I FELT HELPLESS IN MY PRESENT STATE. I COULDN'T BE SEEN OR HEARD. I COULD DO NOTHING TO PREVENT BRAD FROM CARRYING OUT HIS DIABOLICAL PLOT!

AS YOU KNOW, HE HAD NO LIVING RELATIVES, HAVING GONE THROUGH COLLEGE WITH HANK. I WAS HIS CLOSEST FRIEND...



SUDDENLY, A NEW TURN OF EVENTS CROPPED UP IN THE FORM OF A NEWSPAPER, IN THE HANDS OF BRAD'S SECRETARY!!

MISS GATES! I THOUGHT I LEFT SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS THAT I WAS NOT TO BE INTERRUPTED!

B. BUT THIS STORY IN THE AFTERNOON PAPER! I WAS SURE YOU'D WANT TO SEE IT!



AND NOW, THE WHOLE MALIGNANT PLOT CAME OUT!

LISTEN TO THIS! 'AFTER A FOUR-DAY INVESTIGATION, DEFINITE EVIDENCE HAS BEEN FOUND, LEADING OFFICIALS TO BELIEVE THAT THE TRAIN WAS DELIBERATELY WRECKED BY A TIME-BOMB!'

GREAT SCOTT!
THEN IT WASN'T AN ACCIDENT!



NO! IT WASN'T AN ACCIDENT! IT WAS A DIABOLICALLY PLANNED EXPLOSION! I WASN'T THE VICTIM OF AN ACCIDENT! I WAS MURDERED!



...AND UNLESS I MISS MY GUESS, THE MURDERER IS IN THE ROOM... RIGHT NOW!

REGARDLESS OF THE FACTS, GENTLEMEN, I WANT YOU ALL TO KNOW THAT I'LL CONTINUE ALONG WITH THE BUSINESS!



"THEN THE PROOF OF BRAD'S GUILT HIT ME SQUARE IN THE FACE. AS BRAD OPENED A DESK DRAWER TO FILE AWAY THE WILL, AN ACT HE WOULDN'T HAVE PERFORMED HAD HE KNOWN I WAS BEHIND HIM, I SAW SEVERAL EXPLOSIVE CAPS IN THAT DRAWER!"

"BRAD HAD ACTUALLY GONE TO THE TROUBLE OF DESTROYING AN ENTIRE TRAIN, KILLING 14 PEOPLE, JUST TO GET AT ME!"

I CAN'T LET HIM CLOSE THAT DRAWER! I CAN'T!

HANG THIS DRAWER! ALWAYS STICKS ON ME!

I'VE GOT TO HOLD IT OPEN... I'VE GOT TO!

HAVING SOME TROUBLE! MAYBE I CAN HELP.



"I DON'T KNOW WHETHER MY TUGGINGS DID IT OR NOT, BUT I HELD ON FOR ALL I WAS WORTH, UNTIL..."

NO! NO! DON'T BOTHER! I'LL HAVE IT FIXED!

OH, NO BOTHER AT ALL. I... SAY, WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH EXPLOSIVE CAPS IN YOUR DRAWER?

"THE EXPRESSION ON BRAD'S FACE ALONE WAS ENOUGH TO CONVICT HIM!"



SO YOU KNOW! BUT IT WON'T DO YOU ANY GOOD... UGH!

DROP IT!

"AS BRAD WAS TAKEN INTO CUSTODY, I SUDDENLY FELT MYSELF GROW LIGHTER AND LIGHTER, AND I BEGAN TO RISE. I FELT THAT I HAD REMAINED ON EARTH FOR SOME SPECIFIC JOB AND THAT NOW THE JOB HAD BEEN DONE I HAD TRAPPED MY MURDERER! NOW I COULD REST IN PEACE!"



THE END

A KILLER'S BRAIN

ROGER VANE thought he had detected a little note of apprehension in the doctor's voice. Wildly his mind strove for a scheme. He recalled that Dolen had been convicted of choking a man to death—unnecessarily. His brain seemed to be vainly groping for something—a key to escape. In the meantime he made conversation.

"Why did you help him to escape, Doc? You might as well satisfy my curiosity."

Gassner beamed with pride. He nodded, and said: "Gladly, Mr. Vane. There are so few I can confide in, and you—are safe, now. You see, my plan was of the very essence of 'genius.' First, I offered Dolen his liberty in exchange for the use of his brain!"

Vane started. "The use of his—brain?"

"Exactly. I smuggled a hypo of serum into him in prison, so that he was immune to gas. Ivan did that when he visited him. Then he drove out of the prison grounds. That was how Ivan spread the gas in the prison. The exhaust of the car was fitted to a tank under the floor boards—a tank of my ethylene-urethane. In that manner everybody was gassed while Dolen walked out, a free man!"

"Marvelous," Vane gasped. "You're a genius, Doc!"

He said it, partly to lull the other by the flattery which he obviously yearned for, and partly to cover up the wild light in his own eye. For he had just thought of a wild, impossible scheme to frustrate this madman—a scheme that might well end, though, in his own destruction.

Gassner went on. "That was only a single step. It happened that Courtland Spears, the president of the Empire City Bank, was here at the time, for an appendectomy. I timed Dolen's escape carefully to coincide with that. I removed Mr. Spears's appendix. But I went further. I also removed his cerebral cortex!"

"Dolen came here from prison. He had enough confidence in my ability as a surgeon to submit to the same operation—with one million dollars of loot in sight!"

VANE looked at Dolen. The recital seemed to be making no impression on the animal part of the brain that remained to him. Only in his eyes was there a hint of the smoldering instincts that had finally sent him on the road to the electric chair. Vane turned his head back to Gassner, who was going on.

"And then, my friend, I reached the pinnacle of wizardry in the profession of surgery! I placed Dolen's brain in the skull of Courtland Spears! Can you imagine the delicacy of such a transplantation? I had worked for years to perfect a protoplasmic substance which would knit the membranes together. This is what I used."

"The result was that when the president of the

Empire City Bank returned to his office, he carried back the brain of a criminal! But the body was the body of Courtland Spears, with all his instinctive reactions. You recall, perhaps, that the cashier noted the birthmark, and that he commented on the signature? Spears was in a position to order the bonds shipped out without opposition. It was, my friend, the perfect imposture!"

Vane was astounded. Merely to follow this recital taxed his imagination. But many things became clear.

"So you and your man, Ivan, drove the armored car, eh? Then you drove out to some lonely spot and ran it up the runway into the van. I see it now. That was why it looked as if Spears and the bonds had vanished from the face of the earth!"

Gassner nodded enthusiastically. Then he sighed. "But I was careless. When Spears returned, I operated on him once more, and removed Dolen's cerebral cortex. I left the operating room unguarded for a moment, and Spears, with the instinct of fear which was governed by his cerebellum, ran out, naked as he was, and fled across the field, to the place where he was found by that ambulance doctor."

"And now," said Vane, "you are going to replace Mr. Dolen's cerebral cortex?"

Gassner leaned closer, his lips a thin straight line of heartless cruelty. "No," he confided. "This is where you come in. I am going to put Dolen's brain in your skull!"

Vane's throat was parched. "But why?" he demanded in a hoarse whisper.

"Because then the renowned, the trusted Roger Vane, special investigator for the Bankers' Protective Association, will enable me to get more money, more power!"

Incredible as it sounded, Vane knew that this madman could do just what he threatened. He knew, too, that Gassner would destroy him and Dolen after he had enough to satisfy him. He wasn't going to split with Dolen or anybody else.

This was the time, he decided, to try his almost hopeless plan. He took a deep breath. "I should think," he said, in a loud, sharp voice, "that Red Dolen would choke the life out of you, Doctor!"

Gassner started. His eyes narrowed suspiciously.

From the chair by the window came a low animal growl.

"Yes," Vane repeated, "he ought to get his two hands on you and choke you—choke you!"

Dolen half rose from his chair, eyes glued to Gassner. He was responding to the suggestion.

GASSNER was pale. He snapped his fingers. "Sit down, Dolen, you fool!" he barked. His voice was strained.

The stranger seemed to hesitate. He was deeply under the surgeon's influence.

Vane desperately raised his voice to a shout. "Choke him, Red! Get your hands on his throat! Choke him! Kill! Kill!"

Little red spots appeared in Dolen's eyes. He was like a bull before whom a red flag is waved. A low roar came out of his throat. Slowly he rose and walked around Vane's table. A fierce grin spread over his mouth, saliva drooled from the ends. His big hands with the red hair showing on their backs opened and closed with grim deadliness as he made for the doctor.

Vane's voice was hoarse. "Choke! Choke!" he urged in a desperate monotone.

Gassner's eyes distended with fear. He retreated to the instrument cabinet, fumbled behind, and snatched up a keen-edged scalpel. With that in his hand he faced the advancing killer. "Get back!" he croaked. "Get back!"

But Dolen came on, ponderous, inexorable. He needed no more urging from Vane. His open pajama jacket showed the red hair of a heaving chest. His brutish features were contorted into a terrible mask of killing lust. With the bandages of that inhuman operation on his head, he was the ghastliest thing that Vane had ever seen in his life.

Gassner, with his back to the cabinet, lashed out with the steel scalpel, leaving a deep gash in Dolen's chest, from which the blood oozed horribly. But he seemed not to feel it. His hands came up, his fingers encircled the doctor's throat in a terrible grip.

Gassner lashed out again and again with the scalpel, and brought blood in a dozen places. But those implacable fingers clung to their grip. Gassner's face grew purple; he gagged; his eyes bulged. A strangled scream like the bleating of a sheep escaped from his mouth, then he sagged limply.

Vane had been unable to tear his eyes from the awful picture. Now he saw Dolen drop the doctor's body as a child would drop a discarded toy. Then he turned slowly and advanced upon Vane, hands opening and closing spasmodically.

This was what Vane had feared. The killer deep within him had tasted the sweet taste of blood and would not be stopped now. Blood gushed from a dozen wounds left by Gassner's scalpel. The bandage on his head had come askew. But he came on, his murderous eyes fixating on Vane.

ROGER VANE squirmed in his straps. He could do nothing but wait for those hungry hands to close on his windpipe.

And then while Dolen's feet brought him slowly closer, Vane heard the doorbell outside ring. As in a haze, he heard Ivan going to answer it, heard a familiar voice saying:

"We're canvassing the neighborhood. Did anybody here see a little old guy running around naked? He was found on the Parkway. Came from this direction."

And he heard Ivan's answer as Dolen's claws were reaching for his throat. "I'm sorry, sir, I can't help you."

Desperately, Vane shouted: "Up here, Mike! Up

here, for heaven's sake!" His own voice sounded like a stranger's—wild, unnatural.

There came heavy feet in the hallway, the sounds of a scuffle.

Vane's eyes closed against his will. A hot breath was in his face. Dolen's hands were tightening on his throat. "Too late," he thought. Through his head beat the refrain: "Too late, too late, too late!"

He gasped for air. Dolen's bestial fingers were searching under his neck, to snap it. The door of the operating room was locked; he remembered that the lock had snapped when Gassner closed the door. Mike could never make it in time.

"Coming, Roger," Inspector Cummins shouted from the corridor.

Then there was a pounding at the door, and Cummins' voice raised in profanity.

And suddenly a great gust of air swept into Vane's lungs. The fingers about his throat relaxed. A great weight fell on his naked chest. He opened his eyes. Dolen lay across his chest, soaking him in his blood!

Vane breathed deeply, his lungs burning with each intake of air.

A panel of the door crashed in. A hand was inserted and turned the catch. Cummins barged into the room. He stopped short. Two uniformed men crowded in behind him.

The inspector took a look at Vane, then put his hands on his hips and roared with laughter. "Well, Big Shot," he taunted, "I never saw you look so pale before! What's happened here?"

His eyes swept the room, took in Gassner's broken body, and settled on the form of Dolen.

"This guy is Dolen," Vane whispered through a burning larynx. "He finished Gassner, over there, and he was doing the same for me."

Cummins dragged Dolen's body off Vane and started to undo the straps. "What happened to him?"

"He must have collapsed from his wounds, or else he caved in the same as Spears did. He had the same kind of operation. Gassner was our man, all right. He operated on them."

Cummins helped Vane up. Vane flexed his stiff muscles, and looked up to see the inspector grinning at him. He glanced down at himself, and flushed. The two cops who had come in behind Cummins snickered.

"Just like Adam," the inspector jeered at him. "Did you forget your clothes?"

"Okay, Mike," said Vane. "Laugh! Go ahead! Give me the ha-ha for the rest of my life. Only get this—my hunch was right! And you'll find the bonds in the garbage in back of the house. Go ahead and laugh now!"

He had some measure of satisfaction as he saw Cummins scoot out the door for the garage. But the vision of the brainless Dolen, with fingers on his throat, still clung to the retina of his eyes. As long as he lived he felt he would never be able to purge himself of the memory of that apparition out of a horror world!

THE END

MIDNIGHT MARAUDER

OUI, M'SIEUR WALSH, SET IS TURANDOT. I WOULD NOT HUNT HERE MYSELF, BUT IF YOU INSIST, FRANCOIS WILL GO ANYWHERE WITH YOU!

DO YOU BELIEVE IN THIS FANTASTIC LEGEND, FRANCOIS?

FRANCOIS HAS BEEN SEEING WOLVES EVER SINCE HE CAME TO FRENCH CANADA. IT'S AN OLD WIVES' TALE! IT'S MEANT TO FRIGHTEN HUNTERS FROM GOOD GAME PRESERVES!

IT WAS A HUNTER'S PARADISE, THE GUIDE TOLD THEM. THE GAME WAS SO THICK, YOU DIDN'T EVEN HAVE TO AIM. BUT THOSE FRENCH CANADIAN WILDS HIDE A MONSTROUS SECRET, A BEAST WHICH HUNTERS WERE POWERLESS TO KILL. A CREATURE OF DEADLY CUNNING WHO HUNTED THE HUNTERS. BUT MARK DORAN AND HIS PARTY WERE SKEPTICS UNTIL CONFRONTED WITH THE SAVAGE HORROR WHICH TERRORIZED THE OUTRIKTS OF TURANDOT, A VILLAGE WHERE NO MAN DARED HUNT!

ALONG, HERE ARE ZE KEYS TO ZE HUNTING LODGE, BUT IF YOU TAKE MY ADVICE, DO NOT HUNT THERE! THERE HAVE BEEN TOO MANY VICTIMS - BRAVE MEN, JUST LIKE YOU!

EXACTLY WHAT IS THIS CRAWLING HORROR?

OUI, ZE HORROR! SET IS LUPO, A GIANT WOLF NOBODY CAN KEE! HE IS QUIET, CUNNING, FEROCIOUS, AND WHEN HE ATTACK, HE SLASH ZE THROAT... FINISH! FIVE THROATS HE HAVE SLASH IN THE PAST YEAR!



IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR FERENC, THE COBBLER, THEY WOULD HAVE SHAKEN THE DUST OF TURANDOT OFF THEIR FEET...

HA, HA, HA! AGAIN PIERRE'S BELLY SHAKE WITH FEAR! BAH! DO NOT LISTEN TO HIM! HUNTING HERE IS GOOD, AND ONE 'CHASSEUR' IS BETTER THAN TEN WOLVES!

ONE DAY YOU WILL NOT LAUGH, FERENC, WHEN LUPO FIND YOUR THROAT!

I'VE HEARD ENOUGH! LET'S GO TO THE LODGE!



A HALF HOUR LATER, THEY WERE DEEP IN THE TURANDOT WILDS...

LOOK AT THESE TRACKS. MR. WALSH! THE FOREST IS FULL OF DEER, BEAVER, AND BEAR!

AND THEY'RE FRESH, TOO! WE OUGHT TO HAVE A FIELD DAY!



SOON-

OH, MARK, THIS PLACE IS LOVELY! IT WOULD BE IDEAL FOR OUR HONEYMOON AFTER WE'RE MARRIED!

ANYTHING YOUR HEART DESIRES, PRINCESS! I CAN SEE YOU'RE NOT AFRAID OF THE BIG BAD WOLF! SO WHAT SAY WE LOOK THE GAME OVER BEFORE IT GETS DARK?



IN THE EXCITEMENT OF THE CHASE, THEY BECAME SEPARATED...

GOT HIM! A FIVE POINT BUCK AND WHAT A BEAUTY! I WONDER WHERE LAURA AND MR. WALSH ARE?



SUDDENLY!

EEEEAAA! THAT SCREAM! IT SOUNDS LIKE LAURA! SHE'S IN TROUBLE!



THAT BEAST KILLED FRANCOIS! NOW HE'S AFTER LAURA! MY BULLETS DON'T HURT HIM AT ALL! I'VE HIT HIM THREE TIMES!

HELP! HELP!



IF BULLETS WON'T KILL HIM, I'LL CRACK HIS SKULL!

GRARRRRG!





DAD, WHAT HAPPENED? I HEARD THE NOISE— THEN THAT BEASTLY HOWL! WHERE'S MARK?

WELL... ER... MARK HEARD THAT WOLF HOWL AND WENT OUT AFTER IT. HE WANTS TO DESTROY IT!



WALSH WAITED ALL NIGHT FOR MARK TO RETURN. THEN, AT DAWN, MARK APPEARED...

AARRR... THIS LOATHSOME THING! I KNOW MY BODY CHANGED. I HAVEN'T ANY MORE CONTROL... YOU MUST HELP ME!

IT WAS THE BITE ON YOUR ARM! IT'S STILL FRESH! WEREWOLF'S VENOM IS WORKING ON YOU! HE HAS YOU UNDER HIS CONTROL! I'LL TRY TO HELP YOU, MARK!



I'M GOING TO MOLD A BULLET FROM THIS PIECE OF SILVER ON MY WATCH-CHAIN. I'VE READ THAT ONLY SILVER BULLETS CAN KILL A WEREWOLF!



LATER...

MAY THIS DESTROY THE WEREWOLF AND GIVE YOU RELEASE FROM HIS EVIL SPELL, MARK!

I HOPE WITH ALL MY HEART IT DOES! NOW LET'S GO HUNT THE CURSED THING BEFORE LAURA WAKES UP!



WE LAST SAW THE WEREWOLF OVER HERE. THEY NEVER WANDER FAR... MARK, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?



GOOD HEAVENS! LAURA IS ALONE! I MUST GET BACK TO HER! THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT MARK WILL DO IN HIS STATE!

HELP! GET THAT MONSTER AWAY! MARK! DAD!

I CAN'T FIRE! I DON'T WANT TO KILL MARK! I'LL TRY STONING HIM!



GROWRRRR!

IT'S WORKING! I HOPE HE RETURNS TO HUMAN FORM SOON! I CAN'T KEEP LAURA IN THE DARK MUCH LONGER!



AN HOUR LATER...

OH, MARK, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? THE LODGE WAS ATTACKED BY THAT SAME BEAST... FATHER CAME JUST IN TIME! I WAS SO WORRIED ABOUT YOU!

I-I WAS AFTER THAT HORROR! COULDN'T SEEM TO FIND HIM... I'M GLAD YOU'RE ALL RIGHT, LAURA DARLING!

MR. WALSH, YOU MUST DO SOMETHING, FAST! I HAVE NO CONTROL! GUARD HER CLOSELY, AND IF IT BECOMES NECESSARY... KILL ME! DO YOU UNDERSTAND THAT-- KILL ME!

IF WE ONLY KNEW WHO THE WEREWOLF WAS... WHAT HIS HUMAN FORM IS... WE COULD CATCH HIM!

THE NEXT MORNING, LAURA WANTED TO HAVE A PAIR OF BOOTS REPAIRED, SO THE HUNTERS DROVE INTO TURANDOT...

WELL, HERE WE ARE!

I HAVE A FUNNY SENSATION IN MY BODY... SO STRANGE! I FELT IT AS SOON AS WE STOPPED HERE!

SO, YOU DID STAY, AFTER ALL! I TOLD YOU IT WAS ALL NONSENSE!

NOT EXACTLY... WE'VE SEEN THIS AWFUL CREATURE LUPO, AND OUR GUIDE FRANCOIS WAS KILLED. THE VILLAGERS WERE RIGHT!

MARK... WHAT'S THE MATTER? WHY ARE YOU RUNNING AWAY?

HE LOOKS LIKE HE SAW LUPO HIMSELF! HA! HA! HA!

HMM... MAYBE HE DID! THAT QUEER FEELING HE SPOKE ABOUT IN FRONT OF THE SHOP...

SOMETIME LATER, THEY PICKED MARK UP ON THE ROAD TO THE LODGE...

I FELT SICK IN THAT STORE! I DON'T KNOW WHAT CAME OVER ME! FORGIVE ME, LAURA!

IT HAS BEEN HORRIBLE! BUT WE'LL LEAVE THIS PLACE TOMORROW AND FORGET ALL ABOUT IT!

WHEN MARK AND MR. WALSH WERE ALONE...

THE WOUND HADN'T EVEN BEGUN TO HEAL! IT'S UNCANNY ABOUT THAT COBBLER'S SHOP! I RUSHED OUT BECAUSE I THOUGHT I WOULD BE TRANSFORMED... THAT FERENC IS AN ODD CHARACTER!

WE'LL WATCH FERENC'S SHOP TONIGHT. I SUSPECT HIM! THOSE EYEBROWS OF HIS ARE A CLUE! WE CAN'T LEAVE A STONE UNTURNED BEFORE WE LEAVE TURANDOT!



THE NEXT MORNING THEY PACKED TO LEAVE THE TURANDOT TERROR BEHIND THEM...

LOOK, MR. WALSH, THE WOUND IS ALMOST COMPLETELY HEALED! I'VE BEEN RELEASED FROM THE WEREWOLF'S CLUTCHES!

OH, MARK, DON'T FORGET TO STOP FOR MY BOOTS IN TURANDOT!



WHAT'S THE CROWD AND THE POLICE DOING NEAR FERENC'S SHOP?

FERENC IS DEAD... SHOT W/ 26 BULLET IN 26 HEART! BUT IS ALL VERY STRANGE!



DO THEY KNOW HOW IT HAPPENED? WHO KILLED HIM?

NON, NOBODY KNOWS! BUT 26 DOCTEUR FOUND A SILVER BULLET IN HIS HEART. IMAGINE, A SILVER BULLET!



SEVERAL DAYS LATER, BACK IN NEW YORK...

OH, I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE ALL RIGHT AGAIN, MARK. BY THE WAY, DAD, WHAT EVER BECAME OF THAT SILVER CHARM YOU USED TO WEAR ON YOUR WATCH CHAIN?

ER... THE SILVER CHARM? I MUST HAVE LOST IT IN TURANDOT, DEAR. YES, IT'S CERTAINLY IN TURANDOT!



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1. *Journal of Management Education*, 26(1), 1-10.

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